Amendments to the Claims

1. (Canceled)

2. (Canceled)

3. (Currently amended) An isolated and purified gene which contains a DNA coding for a protein comprising an amino acid sequence shown under SEQ ID NO:2[[,]] ~~or a protein having ß-lactam acylase activity and comprising an amino acid sequence having the homology degree with the total amino acid sequence shown under SEQ ID NO: 2 of not less than 90% in total~~.

4. (Previously presented) An isolated and purified gene which contains a DNA coding for a protein comprising an amino acid sequence shown under SEQ ID NO: 2, in which the 204th methionine in the amino acid sequence shown under SEQ ID NO: 2 is substituted with valine.

5. (Canceled)

6. (Canceled)

7. (Canceled)

8. (Canceled)

9. (Previously presented) The gene according to claim 3 which is isolated from a microorganism belonging to the genus *Stenotrophomonas*.

10. (Canceled)

11. (Currently amended) An isolated and purified polynucleotide which contains a nucleotide sequence coding for a protein comprising an amino acid sequence shown under SEQ ID NO: 2[[,]] ~~or a protein having ß-lactam acylase activity and comprising an amino acid~~

~~sequence having the homology degree with the total amino acid sequence shown under SEQ ID NO: 2 of not less than 90% in total~~.

12. (Previously presented) An isolated and purified polynucleotide which contains a nucleotide sequence coding for a protein comprising an amino acid sequence shown under SEQ ID NO: 2, in which the 204th methionine in the amino acid sequence shown under SEQ ID NO:2 is substituted with valine.

13. (Canceled)

14. (Canceled)

15. (Canceled)

16. (Canceled)

17. (Previously presented) An isolated and purified polynucleotide which contains the nucleotide sequence shown under SEQ ID NO: 1.

18. (Previously presented) The polynucleotide according to Claim 11 which is isolated from a microorganism belonging to the genus *Stenotrophomonas*.

19. (Currently amended) An isolated and purified protein which comprises an amino acid sequence shown under SEQ ID NO: 2[[,]] ~~or which has ß-lactam acylase activity and comprises an amino acid sequence having the homology degree with the total amino acid sequence shown under SEQ ID NO: 2 of not less than 90% in total~~.

20. (Previously presented) An isolated and purified protein which comprises an amino acid sequence shown under SEQ ID NO: 2, in which the 204th methionine in the amino acid sequence shown under SEQ ID NO: 2 is substituted with valine.

21. (Canceled)

22. (Canceled)

23. (Canceled)

24. (Previously presented) An isolated and purified gene which contains a transcription regulatory sequence contained in the gene according to Claim 3, wherein the transcription regulatory sequence is a sequence containing 100 bases upstream site from the 125th in SEQ ID NO: 1.

25. (Previously presented) An isolated and purified gene which contains a translation regulatory sequence contained in the gene according to Claim 3, wherein the translation regulatory sequence is a sequence containing 50 bases upstream site from the 125th in SEQ ID NO: 1.

26. (Previously presented) The gene according to Claim 3 under the control of regulon containing a transcription and/or translation regulatory sequence,

wherein either or both of said transcription and/or translation regulatory sequence(s) is (are) substituted with other transcription and/or translation regulatory sequence from the same or different living organism.

27. (Previously presented) A recombinant vector which comprises the gene according to Claim 3.

28. (Currently amended) A transformed microorganism ~~transformant~~

which is obtained ~~obtainable~~ by transforming a host microorganism ~~cell~~ with the recombinant vector according to Claim 27.

29. (Currently amended) The transformed microorganism ~~transformant~~ according to Claim 28, wherein the host microorganism ~~cell~~ is a gram-negative microorganism.

30. (Currently amended) The transformed microorganism ~~transformant~~ according to Claim 28, wherein the host microorganism ~~cell~~ is a gram-positive microorganism.

31. (Currently amended) The transformed microorganism ~~transformant~~ according to Claim 28, wherein the transformed microorganism is ~~which is pUCNTkmTn5-KNK-L/HB101~~ [[(]]FERM BP-8362[[)]].

32. (Currently amended) The transformed microorganism ~~transformant~~ according to Claim 28, wherein the transformed microorganism is ~~which is pUCNTTn5-MuKNK-LI/HB101~~ [[(]]FERM BP-8369[[)]].

33. (Currently amended) A method of producing a ß-lactam acylase

which comprises culturing the transformed microorganism ~~transformant~~ according to Claim 28, and recovering a ß-lactam acylase produced by said transformed microorganism ~~transformant~~.

34. (Previously presented) An isolated and purified ß-lactam acylase

which comprises an amino acid sequence coded by the polynucleotide according to Claim 11.

35. (Canceled)

36. (Currently amended) A method of producing a ß-lactam acylase in a transformed microorganism ~~transformant~~ or of enhancing the production

which comprises preparing the recombinant vector according to Claim 27, transforming a host microorganism ~~cell~~ with said recombinant vector, cloning the obtained transformed microorganism ~~transformant~~, and selecting it.

37. (Original) A method of producing a ß-lactam antibiotic by using the ß-lactam acylase according to Claim 34.

38. (Original) The method according to Claim 37, wherein the ß-lactam antibiotic is amoxycillin.

39. (Currently amended) An immobilized β-lactam acylase
which is obtained ~~obtainable~~ by culturing the transformed microorganism ~~transformant~~ according to Claim 28, and
immobilizing a β-lactam acylase extracted and/or purified from the transformed microorganism ~~transformant~~.